Applicants submit a Terminal Disclaimer herewith, thereby obviating the obviousness-type double rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

II. Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 7-9 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Osawa et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 of the present invention recites a process for producing a magnetic recording medium having at least one magnetic layer formed above a support, the process comprising: a step of providing, on at least one side of the support, a smoothing coating layer having a thickness of 0.10 to 1 μm, a surface roughness of at most 5 nm, a layer having a number of projections having a height of 20 m or higher measured by atomic force microscopy (AFM) of at most 20 projections/900 μm^2, and an amount of residual solvent of less than 10 mg/m^2; and a step of forming at least one magnetic layer on or above the smoothing coating layer without winding up.

Osawa et al is directed to a biaxially oriented laminate film comprising a thermoplastic resin layer A and a thermoplastic resin layer B, which is laminated on one side of the thermoplastic resin layer A. (See claim 1 of Osawa et al).

As stated above, the present invention is directed to a process for producing a magnetic recording medium having at least one magnetic layer formed above a support, wherein the process comprises: a step of providing, on at least one side of the support, a smoothing coating layer having a thickness of 0.10 to 1 μm.

The Examiner asserts that Osawa et al teaches "a smooth coating layer" at column 6, lines 45-50 and column 8, lines 45-59. However, Osawa et al does not teach a "smooth coating layer" in this disclosure. In "the first laminate film" of Osawa et al (as defined at column 3, line 4 of the reference) a thermoplastic resin layer B is laminated on one side of a thermoplastic layer B by coextrusion, which is followed by biaxial orientation (See Example 1). Osawa et al does not teach any coating layer for smoothing. Osawa et al only teaches coating of a magnetic layer in column 8, lines 45-59.

Osawa et al therefore does not teach an amount of residual solvent of the smooth coating layer nor a step of forming at least one magnetic layer on or above the smoothing coating layer without winding up.

Accordingly, Osawa et al does not teach all elements of the present claims and cannot be said to anticipate the claimed invention. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

III. Response to Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

A. Osawa et al in view of Ryoke et al

Claims 4-6, 10 and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Osawa et al in view of Ryoke et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that Osawa et al does not disclose a "smooth coating layer" for the reasons set forth above. Ryoke et al discloses a radiation-curable resin or an ultraviolet curing resin in column 9, lines 3-37. These resins are disclosed as a binder to be incorporated in the magnetic layer and backing layer (see column 9,

lines 8-9 of the reference). No radiation-curable resin is disclosed for use as a compound in a smooth coating layer. Thus, Ryoke et al does not remedy the deficiencies of Osawa et al.

Accordingly, the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

B. Osawa et al in view of Yamazaki et al

Claims 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Osawa et al in view of Yamazaki et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that Osawa et al does not disclose a "smooth coating layer" for the reasons set forth above. Yamazaki et al also fails to teach a "smooth coating layer" and therefore Yamazaki et al does not remedy the deficiencies of Osawa et al. Thus, the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

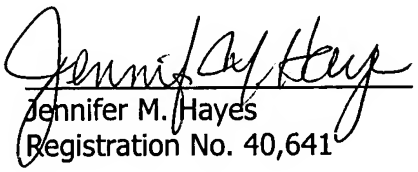
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 3, 2006